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United Nations System Staff College

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 60/214, by which the Assembly decided that the biennial reports on the activities of the College should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council rather than to the Assembly.

The report shows the gradual growth of the College and its firm commitment to serving as a centre of excellence for learning and knowledge management for the United Nations system as a whole. The growing trust placed in the College's services by organizations of the United Nations system is evidence of a consolidated reputational shift that the College was able to initiate and maintain during the reporting period.

The programme of the United Nations System Staff College during the period under review recorded a delivery rate of more than 89 per cent in terms of the 2010 results-based budget and reached more than 20,000 people through learning and training activities.

The report recommends that the College play an even greater role in United Nations-wide learning and leadership skills-building, and that the specific use of the College's capacities be expanded to other areas of the United Nations system.

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Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Overview of activities	3
	A. Fostering a cohesive management culture in the United Nations system	4
	B. Reinforcing system-wide coherence	5
	C. Strengthening knowledge-sharing in the system	7
	D. Supporting the peace, security and staff safety efforts of the United Nations	9
III.	Strengthening partnerships	10
IV.	Main accomplishments	11
V.	Recommendations	11

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 60/214, in which, inter alia, the Assembly reaffirmed "the role of the Staff College as an institution for system-wide knowledge management, training and continuous learning for the staff of the United Nations system, in particular in the areas of economic and social development, peace and security and internal management". It also decided that the biennial reports on the activities of the College should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council rather than to the Assembly. This report covers the two years that have elapsed since the previous report (E/2009/77).

2. The present report highlights progress made towards the College's optimal goal of becoming a centre of excellence for the United Nations system's internal learning and training, while providing concrete examples of the College's efforts to respond to the important invitation, made by the General Assembly in resolution 60/214, to foster a cohesive management culture across the United Nations system, reinforce system-wide coherence through its unique inter-agency approach to training, further strengthen its engagement in knowledge-sharing and support the internationally agreed development goals in the areas of development, peace and collective security.

3. The report shows how the College has boosted its outreach, strengthened its standing in the United Nations system and diversified its funding to secure long-term sustainability. Section III illustrates the College's partnership strategy, which contributed to the achievement of the above-mentioned goals, the introduction of 11 new courses and the development of three new knowledge products in 2010. Section IV provides an overview of the College's growth during the two years under review in terms of number of beneficiaries, training portfolio, resources and structural stability.

4. During its 15 years of existence, the Staff College has made steady progress in terms of the number of United Nations staff participating in its programmes, the level and diversification of its overall funding, the thematic focus of its courses and, most important, the quality of its services. Since its modest beginning in 1996 as a project, with programmes targeting mainly United Nations staff in the field and with approximately 1,000 participants per year, the College has evolved into a fully fledged provider of training aimed at all managerial levels of the United Nations system, reaching more than 14,000 beneficiaries in 2010 alone and focusing on substantive areas in support of the goals of the United Nations. In section V of the present report, Member States are invited to consider this growing performance as a basis for the formulation of recommendations concerning the College's objectives and its learning and training role for the United Nations system.

II. Overview of activities

5. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/208, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to continue and intensify efforts related to inter-agency staff mobility, re-profiling and redeployment of staff, as well as training and skills upgrading, notably at the United Nations System Staff College at

Turin, Italy, the College continued to make every effort to deliver high-quality services at the inter-agency level.

6. The gradual growth in the number of beneficiaries trained during the period under review, with an increase of 23 per cent in 2010, shows the College's ability to meet the training demands of the United Nations system. Through cutting-edge methodologies employed in face-to-face and distance learning activities, the College has been able to lend more coherence and coordination to the many initiatives of the United Nations system, encouraging the multitude of United Nations organizations to work in a more consistent manner. The inter-agency nature of the College's services not only prevented duplication in the training offered by single agencies, but also complemented and enriched their efforts.

7. For the purposes of the present report, training and learning activities carried out during the reporting period are presented in terms of the following four main thematic areas: (a) fostering a cohesive management culture in the United Nations system; (b) reinforcing system-wide coherence; (c) strengthening knowledge-sharing in the system; and (d) supporting the peace, security and staff safety efforts of the United Nations. All Staff College activities presented are underpinned by their inter-agency nature and are intended to strengthen collaboration within the United Nations system, as envisaged in the Statute of the College (resolution 55/278, annex).

A. Fostering a cohesive management culture in the United Nations system

8. The High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence, in its report entitled "Delivering as One" (see A/61/583), recommended that: "A fundamental overhaul of staff training and career development programmes should be carried out by 2010 to ensure that, at all levels of the system, staff serving the United Nations are motivated and have appropriate professional skills. The United Nations System Staff College should have the capacity to provide executive leadership training to senior United Nations managers. This would enable more effective management of change processes and contribute to a common management culture in the United Nations system."

9. The College fully responded to this recommendation by enhancing its offerings in the area of executive leadership at both the headquarters and country levels. It also continued to develop young leaders by providing induction for entry-level officials. Early in 2009, the United Nations Leaders Programme was developed, and it quickly became the flagship programme of the Staff College. Since then, six cohorts have been delivered, providing top-level leadership training to nearly 150 directors within the system, and another two courses are planned for the second part of 2011.

10. The United Nations Leaders Programme provides United Nations directors with an innovative forum for learning, driven by a mix of theory and practice. By virtue of its design, the Programme provides access to pioneering knowledge regarding key global challenges confronted by the United Nations, while exploring the latest theories and trends in leadership development. It also represents a unique opportunity for the sharing of experiences, practical knowledge, lessons learned and good practices in leadership across the United Nations system. The aim is to

develop strategic leaders who think and act innovatively, but work collectively to further advance the mandates of the Organization. During the period under review, the United Nations Leaders Programme tackled the challenges of leadership by focusing on the thematic issues of ethics and accountability, information and communications technology, sustainable development, human rights and peace and security.

11. World-renowned leaders in fields as broad as economics, security, business and the arts were invited to share their personal leadership experience, providing participants with practical examples through which collective United Nations leadership can be reflected, discussed, tested and applied in a safe and non-conventional learning environment. The Programme constantly receives very high marks. It benefits from the participation of academics from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Institut européen d'administration des affaires (INSEAD).

12. With a view to further increasing the capacity of top-level United Nations country team officials who address development issues and are called upon to coordinate the work of the various United Nations organizations in developing countries, the Staff College delivered eight United Nations country team leadership and coordination skills courses during the reporting period, training more than 200 officials. This programme, initiated in 2006, is designed specifically for senior officials in United Nations country teams. Such teams not only need experts to manage programmes and projects, but also leaders who can collectively harmonize and guide their efforts and coordinate the complex range of United Nations actors on the ground. The country team leadership and coordination skills course addresses such issues as enhancing leadership, negotiation, coordination, management and communication. Particular attention is paid to helping officials gain the skills necessary to address sensitive cultural and political issues.

13. The Staff College promotes a cohesive management culture and a sense of belonging to the Organization on the part of United Nations professionals at the beginning of their careers. This is why it has continued to provide, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, training for newly recruited young professionals working under the Junior Professional Officer and United Nations Fellowship programmes. Junior Professional Officers are exposed to a comprehensive overview of the United Nations system, including its mandate, procedures, core values and competencies. Key practical skills are strengthened, such as project cycle management, effective public speaking, cross-cultural communications, presentation and writing skills. The programme also presents a unique opportunity to begin to create a solid network of professional contacts and to share experiences. A total of 119 staff have been trained.

B. Reinforcing system-wide coherence

14. Supporting the efforts of the United Nations to increase the system's coherence and effectiveness is one of the key goals of the United Nations System Staff College. The College has been working closely with the United Nations Development Group in moving forward the reform agenda of the Secretary-General at the country level, and it supports United Nations staff and their development partners. This important partnership was referred to in the report of the Secretary-

General on human resources challenges within the United Nations development system at the country level (E/2009/75), which contained the recommendation that the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations System Staff College further develop knowledge and training on capacity development, building on progress made thus far.

15. Staff College activities in this area are implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office and are aimed primarily at assisting in the planning and design of United Nations strategic interventions through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The College organized and delivered more than 70 learning and planning events for United Nations country teams in 2010 alone. It also assisted the teams in better integrating key programming principles and business practices.

16. In addition, the College has provided multifaceted support to United Nations country teams and peace operations to enable them to conduct and make use of conflict analysis as a basis for planning and programming processes such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, strategic assessment, the integrated strategic framework, post-conflict needs assessment and the peacebuilding priority plan. Conflict analysis, as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework preparation phase, assists in the selection of priorities, which can have a long-term stabilizing impact, and is also used to create a common vision for missions and United Nations agencies with regard to peace consolidation.

17. The capacity of United Nations staff to effectively apply a human rights-based approach and results-based management tools was the subject of 20 workshops during the period under review. These courses use case studies and exercises drawn directly from United Nations experiences in various countries. They offer participants an opportunity to familiarize themselves with these two key programming principles, to understand how they complement each other, and to apply them to their development work. Moreover, new initiatives have been undertaken in the field of environmental sustainability, disaster risk reduction and climate change, with two training-of-trainers workshops organized.

18. The College supported the numerous calls from Member States and the United Nations system for acceleration of the progress made in the harmonization of business practices.[1] In 2010, the High-level Mission on Business Practices also made recommendations in this area. The College designed three training-of-trainers workshops in 2010. The workshops helped to enhance country capacity and to improve common services and harmonized business practices. The workshops also offered an opportunity to identify cases for the harmonization and simplification of business practices with a view to the delivery of better programmatic results that contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

19. Another key area for increasing the coherence and harmonization of the United Nations system is monitoring and evaluation. The College trained nearly 100 staff during the reporting period through its evaluation and impact assessment courses, designed in collaboration with the ROI Institute. The aim of these workshops is to provide participants with an overview of evaluation practices in the United Nations context and to expose them to the ROI evaluation methodology in an interactive and

[1] See General Assembly resolutions 59/250 and 63/311.

participatory manner. Along the same lines, the College organizes a workshop entitled "Measurement for effective results-based management", an inter-agency course that strengthens and permits the sharing of the competencies of participants in terms of evaluation methodology, collecting and analysing data, reporting results and using data to manage performance.

20. The Staff College has continued to provide learning services to newly appointed country-based United Nations coordination officers, who play a critical role in supporting country teams in moving the United Nations reform process forward at the country level. The one-week training programme is held in New York prior to or soon after the deployment of newly appointed coordination officers to their respective duty stations in the field.

C. Strengthening knowledge-sharing in the system

21. In an effort to address the need for a better understanding of the concept of knowledge management and knowledge-sharing, and to foster a culture of networking across the United Nations system,[2] the United Nations System Staff College places great emphasis on developing and offering learning tools that can benefit a large number of United Nations staff worldwide and can effectively contribute to the United Nations reform process. By using the latest Internet technology, the College enhances learning throughout the United Nations system in the most cost-effective way possible. Knowledge management and knowledge-sharing underpin the totality of the work of the College, linking theory with practice in a continuing cycle of the systematic generation, sharing and application of knowledge. In keeping with the College's emphasis on inter-agency approaches, all College knowledge management tools and activities are intended to complement the efforts of individual agencies.

22. In 2010, the United Nations System Staff College and the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office jointly managed two inter-agency knowledge fairs that provided opportunities for networking, learning and collective reflection in highly participatory, engaging, informal and stimulating environments. The purpose of these face-to-face meetings for practitioners was to provide United Nations staff with an opportunity to interact and learn from one another, as well as to promote a culture of sharing knowledge. In addition to managing the fairs, the College designed and delivered a course entitled "Think UN, act smart: leveraging experience and good practice", aimed at further enhancing the capacity of staff to apply proven knowledge management tools and techniques. The course seeks to bring about cultural change, break operational silos, foster internal and inter-agency communications and empower United Nations staff to leverage their knowledge and experience by building up the required skills. It does so through a hands-on and pragmatic approach to knowledge management.

23. A series of initiatives that seek to foster the learning-by-sharing approach at all levels of the United Nations system are regularly organized, including important events requested by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. Similarly, the United Nations System Staff College delivers the "dialogue series", a knowledge-sharing event for Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in

[2] See E/AC.51/2006/2.

political and peacekeeping missions around the world, as well as for selected headquarters colleagues working on conflict issues. The two events already organized were funded by the Government of Germany and implemented in partnership with the Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze. The objective is to address emerging thematic issues pertinent to peacekeeping, development assistance and humanitarian intervention, and to provide a unique opportunity for the discussion of specific priority themes.

24. Through its annual Learning Managers Forum, the College continued to bring together the key learning actors of the United Nations system, who find it an ideal place to discuss common challenges and to benefit from the knowledge and experience of senior leaders in the United Nations system and world-renowned figures in the profession.

25. The College also launched a series of new initiatives, all aimed at providing participants with the opportunity to share and discuss the experiences of their agencies and to acquire new skills. In 2010, the Strategic Learning Exchange on "Faith and development" brought together representatives from eight United Nations entities to reflect with representatives of faith-based organizations on the interaction between faith and development. Through the sharing of actual experiences of and lessons learned by partnerships between the United Nations and faith-based communities, the nexus between faith and development and their mutual impacts were evaluated. This event will become part of the College's offering.

26. Other knowledge-sharing events organized by the United Nations System Staff College during the reporting period included: an event on "Implementing the responsibility to protect" and a round table on "Non-State actors: their impact on international humanitarian law and the responsibility to protect", both organized jointly with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law; a forum for practitioners working on issues related to indigenous people and peacebuilding, and the Barcelona Forum on Decentralized Governance and Conflict Prevention, organized in cooperation with the Generalitat of Catalonia, Spain; and a series of meetings on the launching of a gender mainstreaming course.

27. The College increased its involvement in developing online tools and activities for the United Nations system so as to improve the outreach of its services at an affordable cost. In addition to the induction CD-ROM entitled "Welcome to the United Nations" (a multilingual online induction course providing new staff with an introduction to the United Nations system), a new online platform, called UN Knowledge Campus (UNKampus), was launched to act as a "single entry point" for all College activities and events, offering several possibilities to United Nations staff members, including enrolling in a course, contributing to online discussions, seeking or providing peer support, networking, attending "webinars" and downloading resources. Through the platform, more than 20 new communities of practice were created.

28. A number of online toolkits were also developed during the period under review, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office. The toolkits now available cover a wide range of fields. In the area of peace and security, the post-conflict needs assessment toolkit was designed to help users reflect on all aspects of post-conflict situations; two other toolkits were designed to increase staff capacity in conflict prevention analysis, prioritization and assessing the capacity to conduct conflict prevention analysis. In the area of the

human rights approach to programming, an online analytical compilation of case studies and lessons learned on the subject was widely shared within the system. Furthermore, in 2009 the College supported the finalization and roll-out of the United Nations Development Group toolkit designed to help United Nations country teams adopt, on a voluntary basis, elements of the "delivering as one" approach to both programming and business practices. Also in 2009, the e-learning toolkit on United Nations common country programming processes was rolled out as an online resource to bring together all the country-level experiences and tools relating to programme and operations development and implementation.

D. Supporting the peace, security and staff safety efforts of the United Nations

29. During the period under review, the United Nations System Staff College continued to respond to the calls from the United Nations system in the areas of staff safety training, conflict analysis and prevention, and peacebuilding by enhancing its offerings.

30. The College is addressing the increasing demand for safety and security training for United Nations and associated personnel exposed to security risks in their operations in conflict-affected areas, which was recently emphasized by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/132. The College's Secure and Safe Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) programme, developed in collaboration with the Department of Safety and Security, consists of core modules on such topics as radio communications, personal security, mine awareness, travel, convoy and vehicle security, the United Nations security management system, cultural awareness, incident management, stress management, hostage survival and basic first-aid. The training materials can be customized to meet country-specific security and safety needs. The delivery of training in the field is ensured through a pool of College-certified trainers who take part in the training-of-trainers workshops. This produces an ideal multiplier effect that maximizes the outreach of the programme, with approximately 7,000 people receiving certified SSAFE training since 2009.

31. In the area of conflict prevention, the College has developed a number of inter-agency courses focusing on key issues such as the relationship between natural resources and conflict, and understanding how decentralized governance can contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts in volatile and post-conflict contexts.

32. Conflict analysis — a key aspect of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work — provides objective criteria for the setting of priorities and contributes to the evaluation of the impact of preventive and peace consolidation programmes. At the same time, it forms the basis for any peacemaking intervention, since solid conflict assessments help peace mediators to best address the needs and interests of the diverse range of stakeholders involved in a conflict. In this area, the College offers a course on "Conflict analysis for prevention and peacebuilding" to strengthen the capacity of United Nations officials in terms of conflict analysis for both preventive and peacebuilding purposes. The course provides practical skills for the use of conflict analysis in contexts of deteriorating human security, armed conflict, political crisis and other threats to peace.

33. A training course entitled "Conflict prevention: analysis for action training of trainers" was offered in 2010 and will be replicated in 2011. The course seeks to create a pool of trainers and resource persons who are familiar with conflict analysis, peacebuilding and conflict prevention processes and prepared to provide training, advisory and capacity-building services to United Nations staff in the field.

III. Strengthening partnerships

34. In fulfilling its mandate, the United Nations System Staff College works with a variety of partners in the United Nations system. The successful joint leadership of the College and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)[3] since 2007 has enabled the two organizations to work in greater synergy, complementing each other and exchanging knowledge and expertise. This is in line with General Assembly resolution 60/214, in which the Assembly called for close collaboration between the two training institutions.

35. A major development in the partnership strategy took place in 2010 with the establishment of a new tripartite alliance among the United Nations System Staff College, the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support and UNITAR. This new venture was developed in direct response to the report of the Secretary-General on the progress of training in peacekeeping (A/65/644 and Corr.1), which called for the three entities to collaborate on the delivery of the Senior Mission Leaders' Course and the development and eventual delivery of the common peacekeeping curriculum and scenario-based exercises.

36. This call was further reinforced in the recent independent report of the Senior Advisory Group on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict (see A/65/747-S/2011/85), which, in its recommendation 10, clearly identifies the College as one of the key providers of capacity training in the system and calls for it, together with the other training partners, to identify where skills are needed and then either provide training or identify appropriate external trainings; to develop a formal training certification mechanism, operated on a cost-recovery basis, to guarantee programmes of sufficient quality; and to invest in training in crisis response skills.

37. A cooperation framework will be formalized in 2011 that will enable the United Nations System Staff College and UNITAR to support the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support in providing management, job-specific and technical training to its civilian workforce.

38. The United Nations System Staff College also built partnerships with international financial institutions and the private sector, while continuing to develop ties with representatives of non-governmental organizations such as Greenpeace and One Laptop per Child, which also contributed to the College's sponsored events. In 2010, as part of an effort to increase relationships with institutions from the South, the College's courses benefited from speakers from the Dakar-based United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning and the Indian Institute of Management. In 2011, new partnerships will be established with institutes and universities in other regions.

[3] Assistant Secretary-General Carlos Lopes is Director of the College and also Executive Director of UNITAR.

IV. Main accomplishments

39. In 2010, the overall income of the College showed an increase of 18 per cent over the previous year. Expenditure increased by 21 per cent during the same period. A surge in self-generated income from 56 per cent of total income in 2009 to 70 per cent in 2010 reflected the College's strategy of lessening its donor dependency.

40. With a total number of staff of fewer than 40, the College undertook substantial work in 2009 and 2010. Encouraging results were achieved in all programmatic areas, with a delivery rate of more than 89 per cent in terms of the results-based budget for 2010 and with an increase of 23 per cent in the number of beneficiaries reached by the College's learning and training activities compared with 2009. The College's services reached more than 20,000 United Nations staff during the period under review.

41. The growing trust placed in the College's activities by the United Nations system is the evidence of a consolidated reputational shift that the College was able to initiate and maintain during the past two years. Its standing within the United Nations family has witnessed unprecedented growth thanks to a constant improvement in both the quality of its services and its own internal management structure. This reputational shift has transformed the College into a key ally of inter-agency policymaking bodies such as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, as well as the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management, which now rely on the College's inter-agency work for the implementation of training across the system.

42. The strengthening of United Nations System Staff College programmes was also supported by a number of reforms that now enable the College to deliver more efficiently and effectively against its mandate. The year 2010 marked the final stage of the long-needed process of reform of the College governance structure, initiated in 2008 and approved by the Economic and Social Council during its 2009 substantive session.[4]

43. The newly appointed Board of Governors met twice in 2010 under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, ensuring long-term stability and guidance for the College's strategic direction and showing strong support for and commitment to the College's objectives and programmatic priorities. The Expert Technical Review Panel will be newly appointed in 2011, with members selected from among renowned experts in areas of the College's programmatic focus — both within and outside the United Nations system — who possess a strong understanding of learning, training and knowledge management. The Panel will conduct programmatic analysis and provide advice in relation to the programme activities of the College.

V. Recommendations

44. The progress made by the United Nations System Staff College during the reporting period was significant. There was a notable expansion of courses and a

[4] See resolution 2009/10.

substantial increase in the number of beneficiaries, a trend that the College hopes will continue.

45. In the light of the current efforts to strengthen United Nations system-wide coherence, increase the system's effectiveness, improve staff capacity in key areas and build leadership skills for the United Nations of the twenty-first century, the United Nations System Staff College is well placed to play an even greater role in inter-agency learning, training and knowledge management. Member States are encouraged to specifically designate the College as the focal point for United Nations-wide learning and leadership skills-building through precise references in various resolutions relating to these subjects.